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ITEM 7*: PROGRAMME MATTERS, INCLUDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION

PROGRESS OF WORK UNDER THE NEW PROGRAMME ACTIVITY CENTRES

Report of the Executive Director

Note by the Secretariat

The present report describes the progress of work under the three new Programme Activity Centres (PACs) established in accordance with Governing Council decision 16/25 of 31 May 1991, namely Environmental Law and Institutions PAC (ELI/PAC), Global Resource Information Database PAC (GRID/PAC) and Industry and Environment PAC (IE/PAC).

A. *Environmental Law and Institutions Programme Activity Centre (ELI/PAC)*

1. With a view to enhancing UNEP's activities in the development of environmental law and the strengthening of relevant institutional structures, the Environmental Law and Institutions Unit was upgraded to the Environmental Law and Institutions Programme Activity Centre (ELI/PAC) on 1 January 1992, pursuant to Governing Council decision 16/25 of 31 May 1991. The priorities and long-term goals of ELI/PAC were laid down in the annex to the decision covering the following three programme areas: promotion and implementation of global legal instruments; formulation and implementation of national environmental legislation and establishment or support of appropriate institutions; and legal education, training and information exchange.

2. ELI/PAC is divided into three units, namely International Legal Instruments; National Legislation and Institutions; and Legal Education, Training and Information, in line with the three programme areas mentioned above. The composition of staff within ELI/PAC in the Professional category and above as of 30 November 1992 is as follows:

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* Refers to the number of the item on the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/GC.17/1).

Director D-2, Deputy Director D-1 (vacant), Administrative Officer P-3		
International Legal Instruments 1 P-5, 1 P-4 (vacant) 3 P-3s (1 vacant)	National Legislation and Institutions 1 P-4/5, 3 P-3 (3 vacant)	Legal Education Training and Information 1 P-4/5 1 P-3 (vacant)

3. Of the 14 established posts in the Professional and higher categories, 7 had been filled as of 30 November 1992 and the remaining seven posts were expected to be filled in 1993. Eleven established posts for General Service staff, among which eight had been filled as of 30 November 1992, are also expected to be filled in 1993.

International legal instruments

4. Since its upgrading from a unit to a Programme Activity Centre, ELI/PAC has been more active in the development and implementation of international legal instruments. In the programme area of biological diversity, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for a Convention on Biological Diversity held the sixth negotiating session/fourth session in Nairobi in February 1992 and the final negotiating session in Nairobi in May 1992. The agreed text of the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted by a conference of high-level government officials in Nairobi on 22 May 1992. The Convention was opened for signature in Rio de Janeiro on 5 June 1992, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). In the course of the negotiation process for the conclusion of the Convention, ELI/PAC had been playing an important role, including the organization of a series of meetings and the preparation of documentation for the meetings. ELI/PAC has been taking action to follow up on the Convention on Biological Diversity, including the establishment of an interim secretariat for the Convention and the implementation of resolutions of the Nairobi Final Act.

5. In the programme area of climate change, in accordance with Governing Council decision 16/41, Section II, paragraph 2, an ELI/PAC staff member was seconded to the secretariat for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change throughout the negotiation process of the Convention. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted at New York on 9 May 1992 and opened for signature at Rio de Janeiro, during UNCED. In line with General Assembly resolution 47/195 of 22 December 1992, ELI/PAC will maintain its active involvement in the follow-up activities of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the implementation of the Convention.

6. For the effective implementation of the amended London Guidelines for the Exchange of Information on Chemicals in International Trade, ELI/PAC, in close cooperation with the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC)/PAC, has been taking action in the field of toxic chemicals management, including the development of legislative guidance on the management of chemicals and the preparation of a Code of Ethics on the International Trade in Chemicals. The third session of the Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on the Implementation of the Amended London Guidelines, organized by ELI/PAC and IRPTC/PAC and scheduled for January 1993, will consider modalities to strengthen the legal basis of the amended London Guidelines.

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7. For 1993 and onwards, ELI/PAC's activities, on the basis of existing mandates, will include the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as preparatory work for the formulation and implementation, as appropriate, of international legal instruments, in particular on marine pollution from land-based sources; exchange of information on chemicals in international trade; desertification; international cooperation in environmental emergencies; and environmental impact assessment. Most of these programme areas have been identified for action in Agenda 21, as well as in the Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the present decade.

8. Agenda 21, Chapter 38, paragraph 22, includes among the priority areas for UNEP the further development of international environmental law, in particular conventions and guidelines, and the promotion of their implementation. ELI/PAC's activities should be strengthened to further develop and implement international legal instruments in the field of the environment, in particular through the implementation of the Montevideo Programme for the present decade.

9. Also in its chapter 38, paragraph 22, Agenda 21 lists as one of the priority areas for UNEP the coordinating functions arising from an increasing number of international legal agreements, *inter alia*, the functioning of the secretariats of the conventions. ELI/PAC will continue to take action in this regard, particularly for the coordination of secretariats of conventions developed under the auspices of UNEP.

National legislation and institutions

10. ELI/PAC has been providing technical assistance to developing countries in order to develop national environmental legislation and institutions. Such technical assistance includes activities to assess countries' needs and problems; identify the status of existing legislation and institutional arrangements and assess their adequacy; and assist in the development of environmental policy, legislation and related institutions, according to the specific needs identified. In 1992, ELI/PAC provided such technical assistance to Benin; Burkina Faso; Burundi; Central African Republic; Gambia; Guyana; Mongolia; Namibia; Rwanda; Sao Tome and Principe; and Trinidad and Tobago. For 1993, ELI/PAC plans to provide further technical assistance to more than ten developing countries, on the basis of requests by the Governments concerned.

Legal education, training and information

11. Information on environmental law and institutions has been compiled, published and disseminated to Governments, organizations and the public. The updated version of the *Register of International Treaties and Other Agreements in the Field of the Environment* will be issued in 1993. The *Directory of Principal Governmental Bodies Dealing with the Environment* will be updated and published in 1993. *Selected Multilateral Treaties in the Field of the Environment*, covering conventions and protocols concluded between the late 1970s and the late 1980s was made available in early 1992.

12. With respect to legal education and training, UNEP and the United Nations University (UNU) plan to hold a Global Training Programme in Environmental Law in The Hague in the middle of 1993. Upon request, information on environmental law in general and, specifically, on the work of UNEP in this field has been disseminated widely, on a day-to-day basis, to students and researchers at universities and higher research institutions.

13. A national training programme in environmental law and institutions was held in Lesotho in January 1992 and was attended by government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations and academic circles. A Regional Workshop on Environmental Law for Countries in the South Pacific Region was held in Apia, Western Samoa, in November 1992, organized jointly by UNEP and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. For 1993, a regional training programme for West Asian countries and two national training programmes are planned, one in Asia and the other for Southern African countries.

14. For 1993, ELI/PAC plans to provide for the attachment of senior legal officers from developing countries to its offices for periods of one to three months. In this way the attached officers will gain experience of the legal and institutional aspects of current environmental problems as well as of UNEP activities, in particular in the field of environmental law and institutions.

15. In order to increase the awareness of government officials and the public, ELI/PAC will continue to compile information on environmental law and institutions and to disseminate such information upon request. The establishment of a database of national and international environmental law has been included in ELI/PAC's programme for action for the near future, in order to disseminate such information more widely and promptly. Concerning the establishment of such a database, Chapter 8, paragraph 19 of Agenda 21 on the provision of legal reference and support services has been taken into account.

16. With a view to enhancing the developing countries' capacities and capabilities for sustainable development through the development of national legislation and institutions and ensuring that countries comply with the provisions of international legal instruments, ELI/PAC will strengthen its activities in legal education and training for 1993 and beyond. Such activities are set out in Agenda 21, Chapter 8, paragraph 20, concerning the establishment of a cooperative training network for sustainable development law. ELI/PAC's activities will also include assistance in building up expertise in international law, particularly in relation to sustainable development, and, as envisaged in Agenda 21, Chapter 39, paragraph 8, in assuring access to the necessary reference information and expertise.

B. *Global Resource Information Database Programme Activity Centre (GRID/PAC)*

17. The overall mission of GRID has remained, namely, to provide timely and reliable georeferenced information and access to a unique international Geographic Information Service (GIS) for addressing environmental issues at global, regional and national levels, in order to bridge the gap between scientific understanding of earth processes and sound management of the environment.

18. Four long-term goals for GRID have been articulated:

(a) Environmental management support: a fully integrated and functioning United Nations-based core GRID system of cooperating agencies and national centres, openly exchanging environmental data and information;

(b) Environmental data management: all major existing global and regional environmental databases to be available through the GRID network;

(c) Agency support: all United Nations specialized agencies and most major intergovernmental organizations to have access to GRID data and technology;

(d) Technology transfer: provision of access to GRID data technology to all countries in the world, providing most countries with functioning GRID-compatible monitoring and assessment centres.

19. The general structural concept of GRID remains unchanged, that is, a distributed system with cooperating centres around the world. The specific notion of co-locating GRID centres with UNEP regional offices has been met only in part, due to budget restrictions and the evolving role of UNEP in the regions. GRID-Geneva covers Europe; GRID-Nairobi, Africa; GRID-Bangkok, South-East Asia; GRID-Sioux Falls, North America. There is an advanced plan for a regional strategy in the Latin American and Caribbean region (under the general rubric of support to development of environmental information systems within Earthwatch). Fact-finding and needs surveys for the West Asia region are at an advanced stage of development.

20. In keeping with the long-term goals stated in paragraphs 18 (a), (b), (d) above, UNEP has encouraged the emergence of a number of "GRID Cooperating Centres". These Centres subscribe to the basic GRID *modus operandi*, have specific areas of competence or responsibility within the GRID network in terms of region or data realms, and are financed largely from sources external to the UNEP Fund. Each Centre has a board of directors or senior advisory group on which GRID/PAC is represented, either directly or by delegation.

21. The total staff complement of the GRID/PAC project is 14 Professionals (not counting a fund management officer shared with GEMS/PAC) and 14 General Service (three of whom are highly skilled digitizing technicians). GRID-Geneva and GRID-Nairobi are wholly UNEP staffed (with the exception of secondments and visiting scientists). The GRID/PAC Deputy Director's position is currently unfilled. GRID-Sioux Falls and GRID-Bangkok each have one UNEP Programme Officer functioning as Facility Managers and for liaison with GRID/PAC.

22. Each GRID Centre also has additional Professional staff, ranging from one or two secondments in the case of GRID-Geneva and GRID-Nairobi, to a total staff commitment of 8 and 13 Professionals in the cases of GRID-Arendal and GRID-Tsukuba, respectively. In round terms, there are some 60 Professional-level staff directly committed to the GRID network. This does not count the hundreds of scientific and technical staff associated with, for example, the United States Geological Survey EROS Data Centre (GRID-Sioux Falls); the Japanese National Institute of Environmental Science's Global Centre for Environmental Research (GRID-Tsukuba); and Brazil's INPE (Instituto National de Pesquisas Espaciais) (GRID-Sao Jose dos Campos).

23. The leitmotiv running through GRID Cooperative Centres has four main elements: database development; project support; support for capacity building; and GRID system development. Current and planned activities within these areas are being adjusted to respond to the more than 2,000 references to environmental information themes contained in Agenda 21.

Database development

24. This includes the acquisition, archiving and dissemination of georeferenced environmental data and information to users. GRID plans to be more active in defining the data needs of various major users. This process already began in early 1992 with the series of "Interactive Agency

Briefings" with the United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental bodies, such as the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, and with UNEP units.

25. Together with the Thailand Meteorological Department, GRID-Bangkok continued work on the development of a cloud-free, composited and geo referenced dataset using 1-km advanced very high resolution radiometer data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Satellite for the region covered by the Bangkok Thailand receiving station. A joint venture between the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the MENRIS (Mountain Environment and Nature Resources Information System) Programme and GRID-Geneva has resulted in the creation of a natural resources database for the Bagmati zone of Nepal.

26. At the request of the Ozone Secretariat, GRID/PAC developed a new database and information retrieval system for managing and reporting production, consumption, export and import statistics for substances controlled by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Two separate surveys are in progress with the aim of building reference database systems of geo-referenced environmental data archives for the Latin American region and the African region, respectively.

Project support

27. This involves providing access to GIS and remote-sensing analysis systems and expertise for supporting environmental assessments and analysis of environmental problems of all scales. Emphasis will be increasingly given to environmental impact assessment, risk assessment, indicator development and state-of-the-environment reporting, in order to assist Earthwatch in building up a portfolio of relevant experience in a wide range of environmental fields, whilst tackling concrete problems.

28. In collaboration with Oceans and Coastal Areas PAC, and with funding from the Government of Belgium, GRID-Nairobi is developing a natural resource database for the East African region stretching from Somalia to Mozambique, including all islands which are part of the East African Action Plan. GRID-Nairobi has continued to revise and update the African Elephant Database, funded through the European Community and Elsa Wild-Animal Appeal, and this currently constitutes the most comprehensive source of information on the distribution, conservation and management of elephants throughout Africa. GRID-Nairobi collaborated with Desertification Control PAC in the production of the Global Atlas of Desertification, a project which also produced a number of new global and African datasets.

Support for capacity building

29. This originally implied support for the training of nationals in GIS and remote-sensing technology. The lessons learned since 1985 have broadened and deepened the approach with appropriate partners to include institutional, subregional and environmental information questions. The presence of GRID in the regions should be strengthened, on the one hand to provide data management and GIS technical backstopping to the growing regional and national support programmes of environmental information systems and networks of Earthwatch (GEMS in particular), and on the other to provide a technical data management support service to the UNEP Regional Liaison Offices.

GRID system development

30. This is a "housekeeping" function to ensure that GRID is able to provide modern and cost-effective support to users. It includes routine maintenance and growth, as well as the completion of the "GRID-MetaDatabase", a computerized catalogue of "data about data", which will help fulfill the long-term goal set out in section A, paragraph 2 of the Annex to Governing Council decision 16/25. It also includes the improvement of information exchange via telecommunications.

31. Concerning the GRID network, the inauguration of new GRID Cooperating Centres will be set against a series of requirements, in terms of data types, regional coverage and technical support. Thus, new Centres should fit into a predetermined matrix of information requirements which would serve the broader needs of Earthwatch on the one hand, and countries, subregional bodies and agencies, on the other. Negotiations are under way with the Canadian Center for Remote Sensing (CCRS) for the establishment of a GRID Cooperating Centre in Canada. Negotiations are also at an advanced stage with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Environment of Denmark for the establishment of a Danish GRID centre, with major responsibility for GIS-related education and didactic research.

C. *Industry and Environment Programme Activity Centre (IE/PAC)*

32. The Industry and Environment Office was established in 1975 to bring Industry, Governments and non-governmental organizations together to work towards an environmentally sound form of industrial development. The Industry and Environment Office (IEO) was upgraded to a Programme Activity Centre pursuant to Governing Council decision 16/25 of May 1991. Since its creation, IE/PAC has been seeking to:

(a) Help formulate policies and strategies for sustainable industrial development and facilitate their implementation;

(b) Promote a preventive approach, through the use of cleaner and safer technologies;

(c) Stimulate the exchange of information on environmentally sound forms of industrial development, providing the technical support needed with a view to strengthening those activities.

33. The priorities and long-term goals of IE/PAC set out in section B of the Annex to decision 16/25 cover the following programme areas: promotion of environmentally sound management of selected industrial sectors; promotion of cleaner production; prevention of industrial accidents; and technical support to developing countries. In the same decision the Governing Council also requested IE/PAC to develop its activities in the field of transportation and tourism. In June 1991, IE/PAC was assigned clearing-house functions vis-à-vis the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, activities which are funded by the Interim Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

34. In line with the above priorities, IE/PAC consists of five programme areas, namely: Cleaner Production; APELL - Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level; Sectoral Activities; Transport and Tourism; and OzonAction. The Information and Administration Units serve the five programme areas. The total number of staff envisaged for IE/PAC is 14 Professionals and 15 General Service staff (see "Proposed structure"

below). However, in view of the shortage of funds, posts have to remain vacant and are currently filled by consultants on secondment (gratis) to IE/PAC. Currently, five Professionals are on such secondment. Short-term contracts have also been used within the framework of the OzonAction programme.

Proposed Structure of IE/PAC as at 30 November 1992

Director D-2 Deputy Director D-1 (vacant)				
Administration 1 P-3			Information 1 P-4 (vacant) 1 P-3 1 P-2	
Technological Accidents 1 P-5 (vacant)	Cleaner Production 1 P-5 (vacant)	Sectoral Activities 1 P-5	Transport and Tourism 2 P-5 (vacant) 1 P-3 (vacant)	OzonAction 1 P-5

35. To attain the long-term goals set by the Governing Council, that is, to promote sustainable industrial development, the IE/PAC strategy has been to define, catalyse and help formulate policies and tools for environmental management in industry, transport and tourism; exchange and transfer information; support the implementation of international conventions; support capacity building to deal with industrial and environmental issues; promote demonstration projects; and network with other concerned partners in Government and industry, and with academics and environmental groups.

36. In each programme area, activities to implement the IE/PAC strategy have included information exchange through database development and operation of the query-response system; publication of technical guidelines and a regular newsletter and review; training of decision makers in government and industry; and technical assistance.

37. *The Cleaner Production programme* focuses on promoting an integrated preventive environmental strategy with regard to processes and products, in order to reduce risks to humans and the environment. The programme was initiated in 1989, and further developed in line with Governing Council decision 16/33 on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. Major accomplishments in 1992 include: the continued development of ICPIC (the International Cleaner Production Information Clearing-house); the publication in English, French, Spanish and Chinese of the Cleaner Production Newsletter; the organizing of six training workshops at the request of countries; the launching, jointly with the United Nations Industrial Development Organizations (UNIDO) of the "National Cleaner Production Centres" project; and a demonstration project with the World Bank in China. The UNEP Cleaner Production programme was specifically referred to in Agenda 21, Chapters 20 and 30, as being in need of strengthening. Its progress and achievements since 1989 were evaluated on the occasion of a ministerial and senior-level expert conference in October 1992, which provided guidance on ways and means to develop the Cleaner

Production programme as a tool to help transfer technology, and to catalyse the reconciliation between environmental protection and economic development. The meeting also urged IE/PAC to take the necessary steps to prevent developing countries being subjected to the export and dumping of hazardous technologies.

38. *The APELL - Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level - programme* was launched with the support of the international chemical industry in 1988 to respond to Governing Council decisions on industrial accidents. The programme, aims to create awareness of possible hazards in a community, take preventive measures, and develop emergency response plans. Achievements of the APELL programme in 1992 include: the organization of six training workshops at the request of countries (Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Hungary, India, Yemen), to prepare a plan of action to prevent accidents; technical assistance to countries to implement the APELL process (Columbia, Tunisia); publication of a technical report on "hazard identification in a local community"; the publication (jointly with OECD) of an inventory of emergency response centres; and the publication of an APELL newsletter, ensuring information exchange. A total of 72 countries have now designated APELL focal points. The APELL programme was specifically recognized in Agenda 21 as in need of strengthening. The progress made was evaluated by a group of senior-level experts in December 1992, WHO gave particular guidance on the regionalization of the programme and the follow-up to training activities.

39. *Sectoral activities* focus on providing comprehensive guidance in specific sectors of industry to encourage improved environmental performance. The main sectors currently addressed are: mining, aluminium, fertilizer, manufacturing, tanning, textiles, pulp and paper, electronics, and agro-industries. Aspects of the working environment are incorporated into the sectoral activities. Environmental management tools or technologies common to many sectors, such as waste or energy audits, are also addressed. Achievements in 1992 include the publication of three technical reports, providing decision makers in Governments and industry with the necessary guidance for improving environmental management in tanneries and non-ferrous ore mining, and with methodologies to perform audits. Other United Nations agencies, particularly UNIDO and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and concerned industry sectors are closely associated with this work. In addition, a hazardous waste management training programme, linked to sectoral activities, was developed in parallel to the preparation of the Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and Their Disposal. A status report on these activities was prepared in December 1992. A training manual on hazardous waste management was published in cooperation with UNEP's Environmental Education and Training Unit, to be used by trainers worldwide. IE/PAC will now closely coordinate its activities in the field of hazardous waste management with the Basel Convention Secretariat.

40. *The Transport and Tourism programmes* are currently being developed, Agenda 21 recognized the work undertaken by UNEP and the World Tourism Organization in the field of tourism and the environment. In 1992, activities dealt with tourism carrying capacity, management of tourism areas, and tourism facilities. Staff constraints prevented the transport programme from being effectively developed.

41. *The OzonAction programme* has been developed since late 1991 by IE/PAC, which was assigned UNEP's clearing-house role under the Multilateral Ozone Fund. In addition to the information exchange components, support in preparing country programmes is provided to countries consuming low levels of ozone-depleting substances. The

OzonAction programme is regularly evaluated by the Multilateral Ozone Fund Executive Committee, which is reviewing progress reports and deciding upon future activities.

42. To support the above five priority activities, IE/PAC is performing the following additional tasks: publication of a quarterly *Industry and Environment* review; query-response service (in 1992 more than 5,000 requests for information were answered); operation of a library; and regular consultations with industry and trade associations. In particular, in March 1992, UNEP and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) agreed to establish a joint mechanism to follow up the implementation of the *Business Charter for Sustainable Development* adopted by ICC, as a follow-up to WICEM (the World Industry Conference on Environmental Management) I and II.

43. IE/PAC has received financial contributions for specific activities, in particular from the Governments of France, Finland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Commission of the European Communities (CEC).

44. The IE/PAC strategy activities following UNCED were discussed at the end of 1992 by an informal ad hoc group of 15 high-level advisers from Governments, industry and NGOs. They supported the current four activities of IE/PAC, which are at the cutting edge of many fundamental environment and development issues. They recommended that components relating to technology assessment and monitoring of performance should be included in IE/PAC activities. They also underlined the fact that IE/PAC does not yet have the critical mass in terms of financial and human resources to meet the demands of implementing Agenda 21 and even of maintaining the quality of the IE/PAC programme in the future. The group recommended that an advisory body to IE/PAC should be established on a permanent basis.